

OVERVIEW

The final open house and public hearing were held to gather public input on plan priorities, and to provide a public forum for questions or comments related to the plan. The open house was held from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.. The public hearing was held at 6:00 p.m. Mike Nuvalle of the Office of Community Development moderated the hearing, while Mayor Alcombright provided an introduction to the plan and its significance for the future of North Adams. BRPC Senior Planner and Project Manager Amy Kacala walked attendees through the planning process, the elements of the plan, and the five priorities of the plan. North Adams City Planner Mackenzie Greer walked attendees through the implementation phase of the plan—how that will look and happen. She highlighted a number of policies or actions that are happening or have happened during the course of the plan’s development. Approximately 40 members of the public attended.

OPEN HOUSE

In the Open House, attendees were invited to look at two sets of posters. The first set composed an executive summary of the plan, including an introduction to the plan, the vision developed during planning process, and the five key priorities and priority topics by plan chapter. The executive summary style posters for each chapter allowed participants to see what sort of process went into gathering information and developing goals, policies and actions, and also to see the goals from each section. The second set of posters consisted of the five plan priorities:

1. Economic Renewal

2. Physical Reinvestment

3. Thriving, Connected Community

4. Intergenerational Thinking

5. Fiscal Efficiency

Three to ten priority policies were selected by priority work area, as identified by staff and members of the steering committee. Each participant was given twelve blue dots. These dots represented the limited resources with which implementation must be conducted. Attendees were told to allocate their blue dots to the policies they found most important. These results and comments from participants are displayed in the following pages

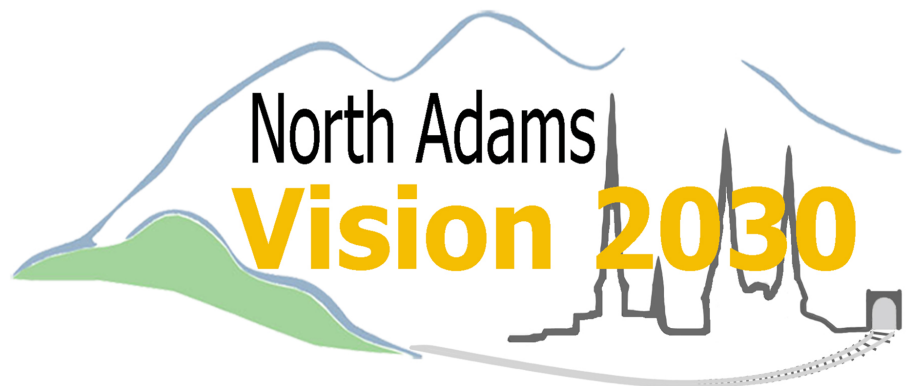
PUBLIC HEARING

The public hearing lasted approximately forty-five minutes. The following comments were provided by attendees:

- The priority should be on improving aesthetics and function of the corridors and gateways and providing access to the River as a resource.
- One attendee inquired about who would oversee the plan and if it would supercede other boards and commissions. Michael Nuvalle responded that the plan is overseen by the Office of Community Development and that it does not take away the roles and responsibilities of any boards and commissions.
- One attendee noted the importance of benchmarking and measuring success as part of the planning process.
- One attendee spoke as a representative staff member of the Northern Berkshire Community Coalition. They participated in many sections of the plan, worked on connecting with neighbors and see the agency as an implementing partner. Annie encouraged other volunteers to step up and participate in their neighborhood work.
- One attendee noted the importance for intergenerational representation on the implementation committees.
- One attendee asked for concrete examples of activities implemented that she and others can point to when community members ask about the plan. The list of actions to date was displayed again and some discussion was had.
- Judy Grinnell, in response to the first comment, described the actions of the Hoosic River Revival.
- One attendee noted that this plan is a long time in coming and encouraged community members to step up and take action.
- The final comment made: an attendee noted how happy she was to learn that the Cemetery Commission has been “resurrected” and asked that others help the Commission to better care for these community resources.

Economic Renewal

How many dollars (sticky dots) should each priority get?



Priority work areas:

Support and grow small/local businesses, especially in the downtown

	Place your votes in a row!
Advance ways to quickly connect small businesses to existing re-sources (E3.1B)	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>
Develop package of small business programs (E3.2 D)	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>
Increase new green and public spaces in the downtown (E7.4A)	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>
Address needs for redevelopment of mills (E10.2C)	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>
Rebrand and market the city (E1.1A)	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>
Use signage to market key destinations (E7.2A)	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>
Reposition Heritage State Park as a city attraction (E9.1)	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>
Designate single point of contact for business development (E4.1B)	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>
Enhance retail business options for residents and visitors (E8.1)	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>
Consider growing and recruiting food related anchor businesses (FH2.1B)	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

Other priorities for early action? Write in additional action items from the plan here.



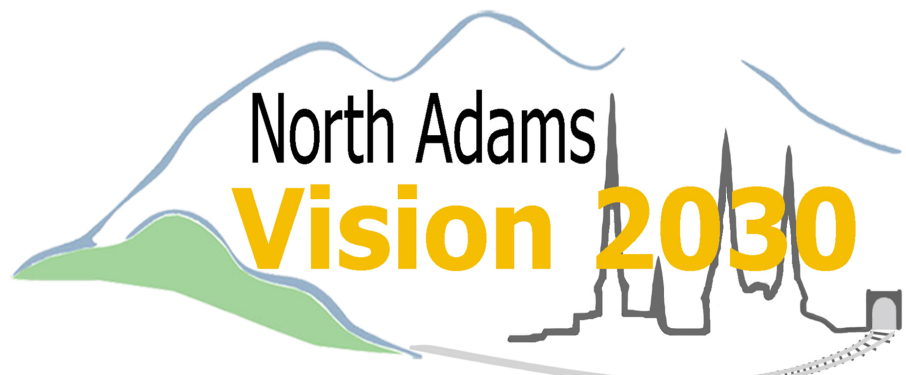
- Small business grants for disadvantaged populations (youth, women, abilities, ethnicity, etc.)
- Technical job growth and training
- Where is job creation?
- Community kitchen or co-packing facility!
- Create a business incubator space in a vacant building

Top Priorities

1. Increase new green and public spaces in the downtown (E7.4A)
2. Address needs for redevelopment of mills (E10.2C)
3. Consider growing and recruiting food related anchor businesses (FH2.1B)
4. Rebrand and market the city (E1.1A)

Physical Reinvestment

How many dollars (sticky dots) should each priority get?

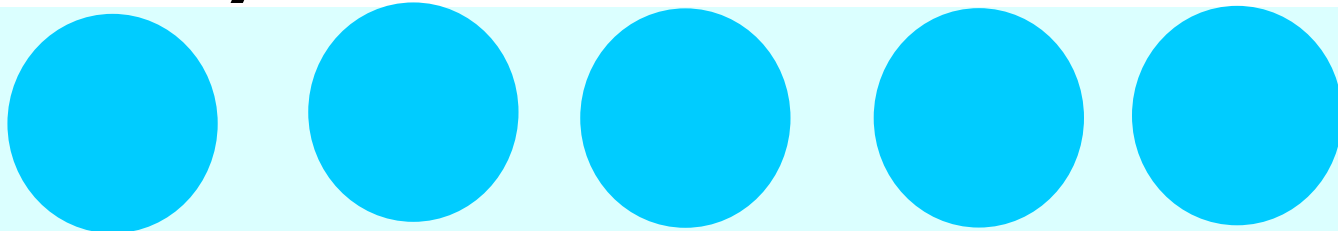


Priority work areas:

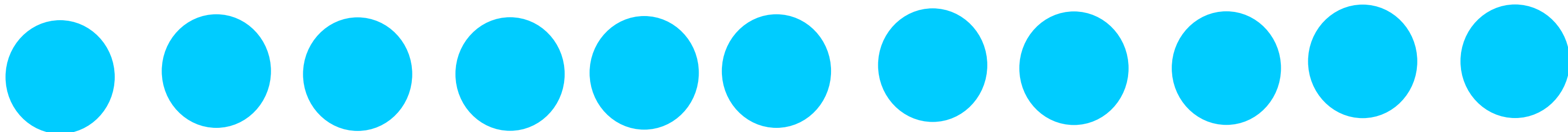
Reinvest in neighborhoods

Bring all existing historic surveys up-to date (HP1.1A)

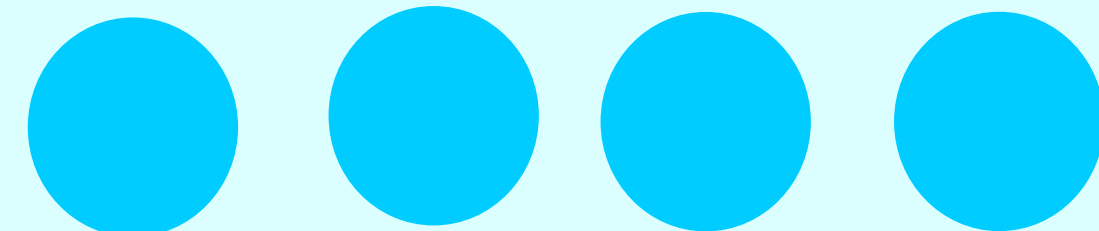
Place your votes in a row!



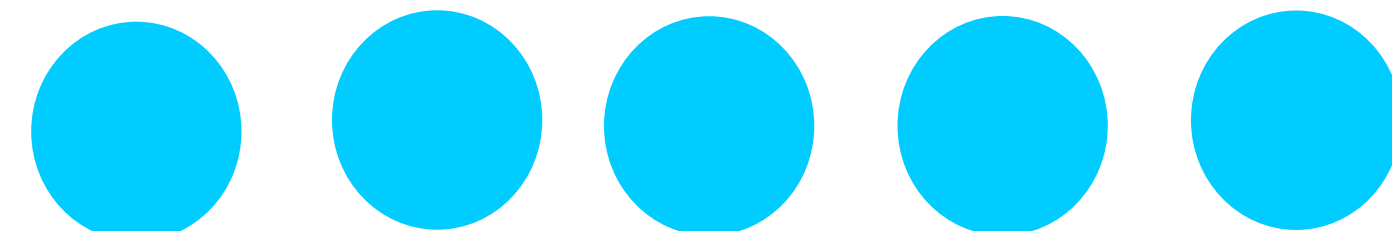
Prioritize sites for new mixed income construction or renovation (HN1.3A)



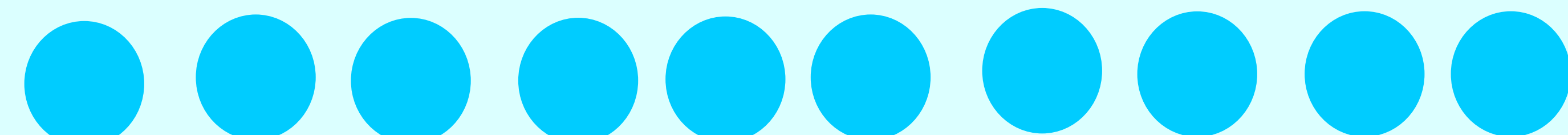
Identify buildings with maintenance concerns early (HP2.1C)



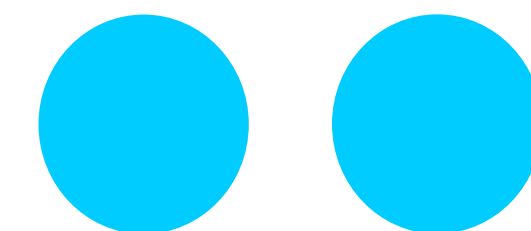
Maintain up-to-date housing needs assessment (HN1.1A)



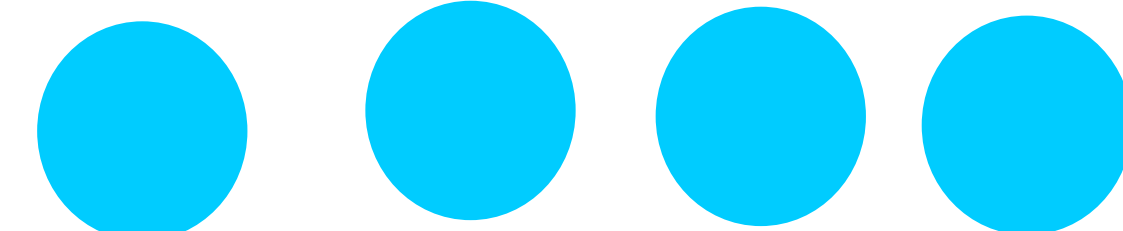
Rental property registration and inspection (HN2.4A)



Create meaningful incentives and penalties to support action (HN2.4B)

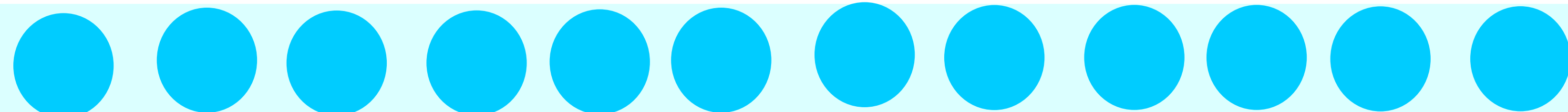


Offer creative programs to support owner action (HN2.1A)

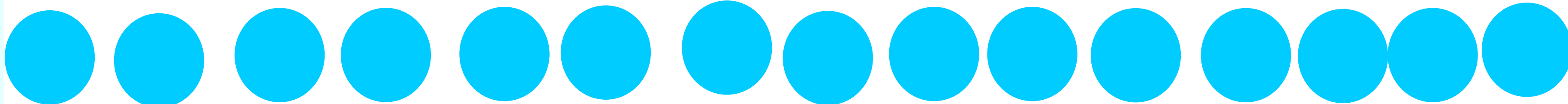


Tackle major capital projects with quality of life and economic benefits

Focus on river greening and increased access within community core (PR 2.2A)



Work with Army corps of engineers and other river partners to improve water and habitat conditions in chutes (PR5.2A)



Other priorities for early action? Write in additional action items from the plan here.

Comments?

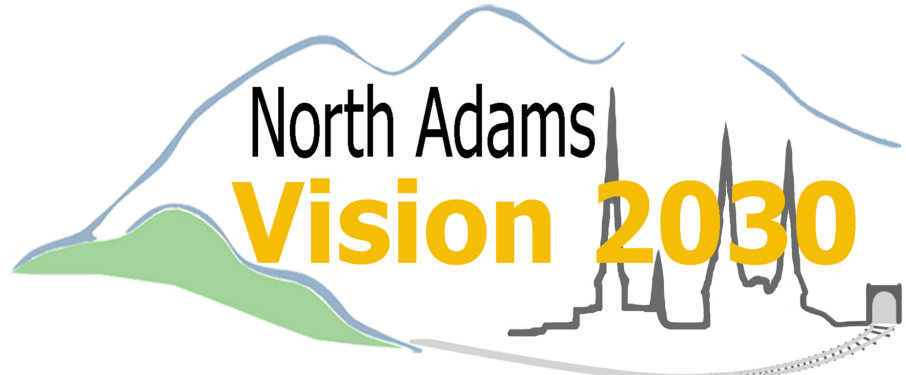
- Water, water everywhere but little can be seen or used—open up **the river!**
- Boat ramp for canoes or motor boats would be great
- Revisit downtown traffic circulation patterns, along with the Veteran’s Memorial Bridge which cuts over Marshal Street and creates a potentially dangerous intersection (within High Streets”

Top Priorities

- 1.**Work with Army corps of engineers and other river partners to improve water and habitat conditions in chutes (PR5.2A)**
2. **Focus on river greening and increased access within community core (PR 2.2A)**
3. **Prioritize sites for new mixed income construction or renovation (HN1.3A)**
4. **Rental property registration and inspection (HN2.4A)**

Thriving, Connected Community

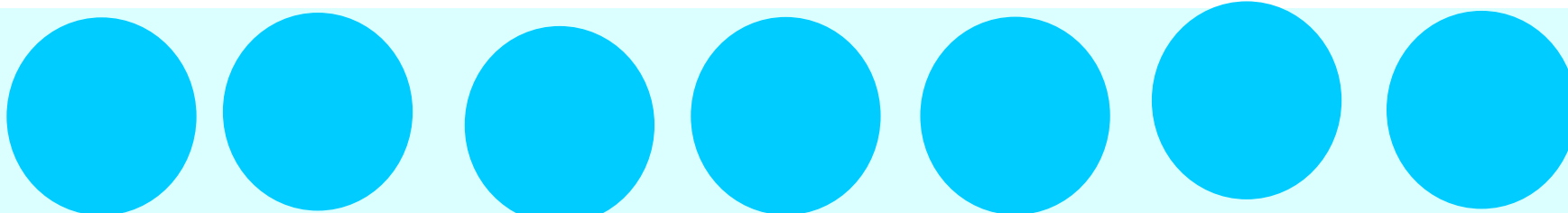
How many dollars (sticky dots) should each priority get?



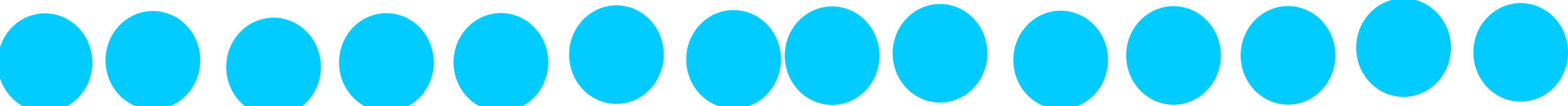
Priority work areas:

Foster opportunities for social interaction and healthy activity

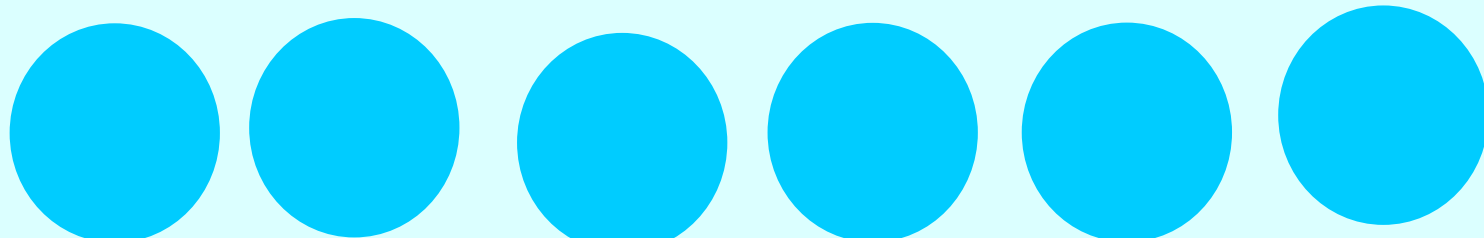
Develop comprehensive North Adams recreation guide (PR1.1A)



Identify viable spaces for urban farming or community gardens (FH1.1A)

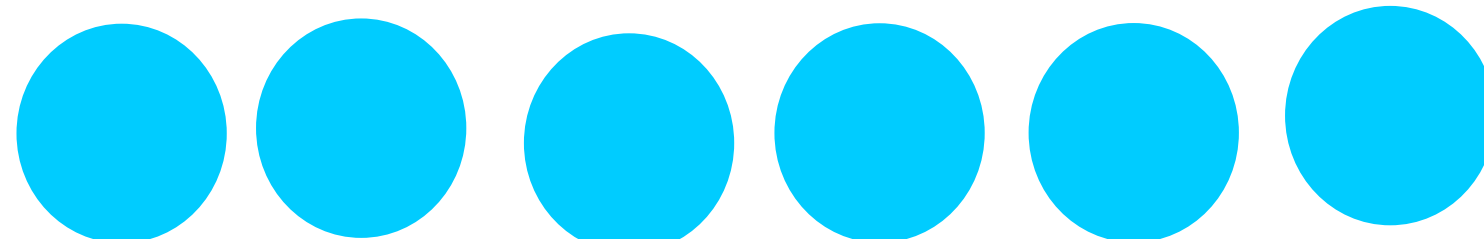


Partner with MiM to assist local or neighborhoods stores in stocking fresh, healthy foods (FH3.4A)

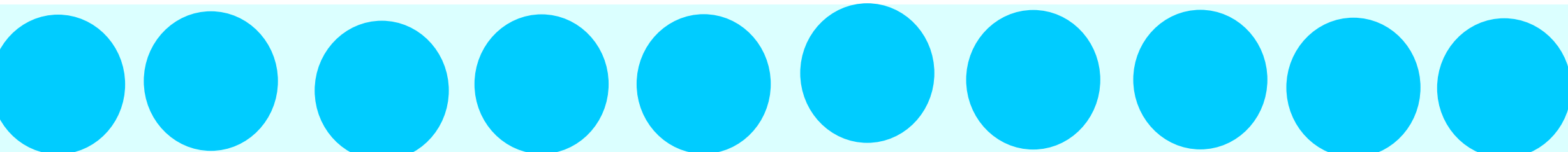


Create stronger physical connections between areas of the city and between the city and other communities

Support transit to better connect local communities (E7.2B)



Create better connections between city and surrounding trail system (E2.2D)



Other priorities for early action? Write in additional action items from the plan here.

Comments?

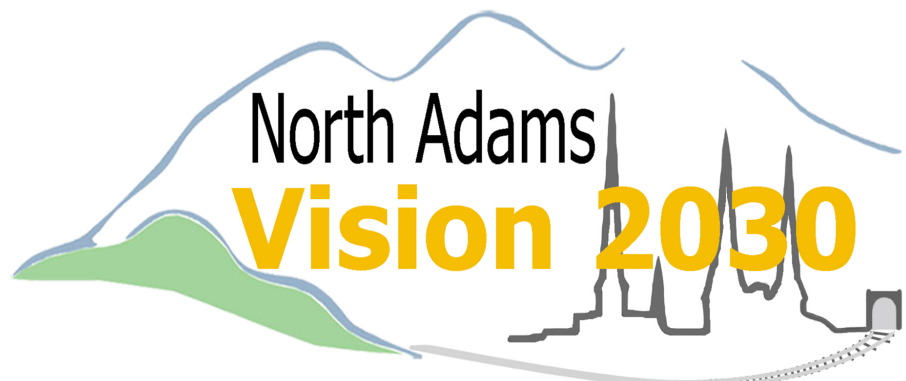
- In addition to better connecting city and surrounding trail systems, the resources for new trails on city lands and forests should be utilized or at least planned so resources for new trails can be pursued. There is much that can be connected via new trails or extensions.
- In addition to identification of spaces for urban farming and community gardens, policy should also support existing and potential farmland within city limits—partner with the community land trusts’ farm support initiative
- Make city money available to maintain school garden program.
- We need a single coordinating body to provide leadership re: arts organizations in the city and region (an arts council)
- Utilize areas of the river and adjacent areas to support social interaction and health activity.

Top Priorities

1. Identify viable spaces for urban farming or community gardens (FH1.1A)
2. Create better connections between city and surrounding trail system (E2.2D)
3. Develop comprehensive North Adams recreation guide (PR1.1A)

Intergenerational Thinking

How many dollars (sticky dots) should each priority get?

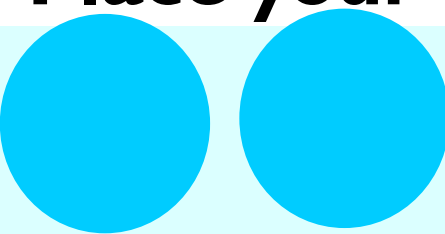


Priority work areas:

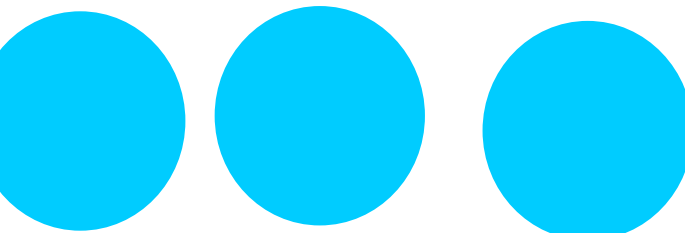
Address climate change and minimize potential impacts to the community

Continue to pursue Green Communities designation (IS4.2)

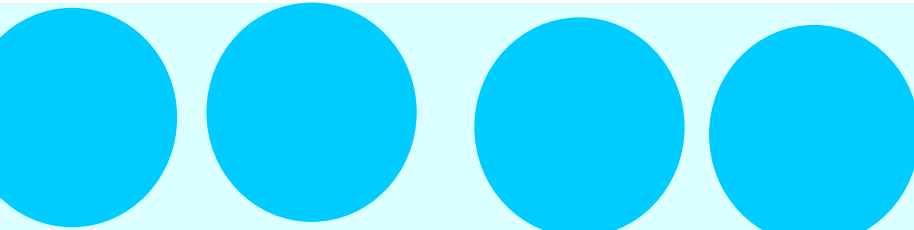
Place your votes in a row!



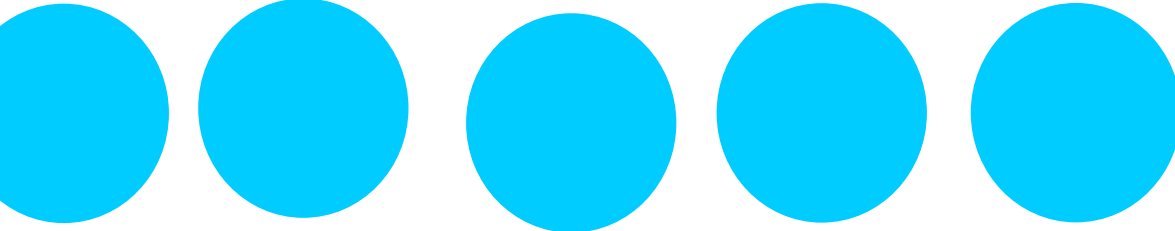
Integrate planning for increased temperatures into North Adams planning practice (IS 2.1)



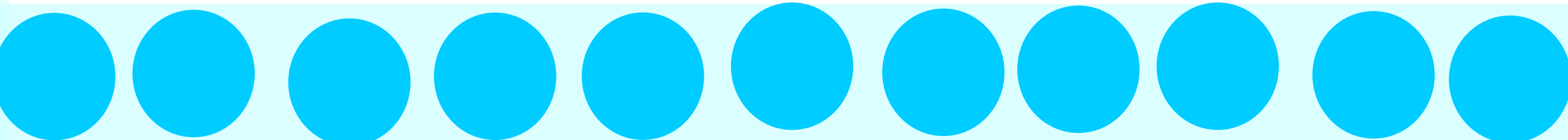
Work to reduce impacts caused by hydrologic extremes from increased intensity and frequency of storm events to periods of drought. (IS 2.2)



Maximize use of existing energy efficiency and conservation programs through marketing and promotion of available options. (IS 4.4)

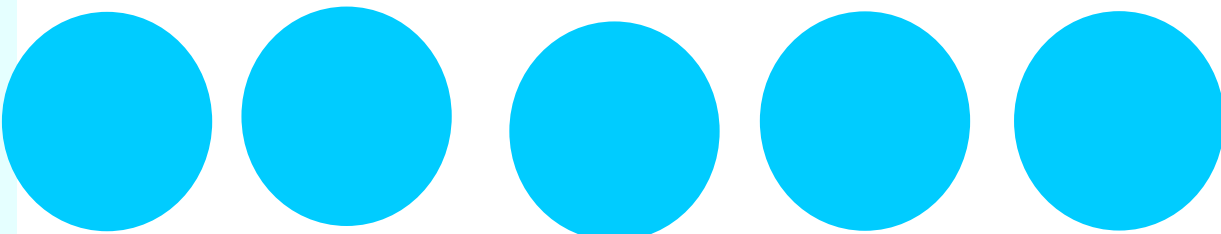


Create a policy and incentive environment that is supportive of renewable energy project implementation. (IS 4.2)

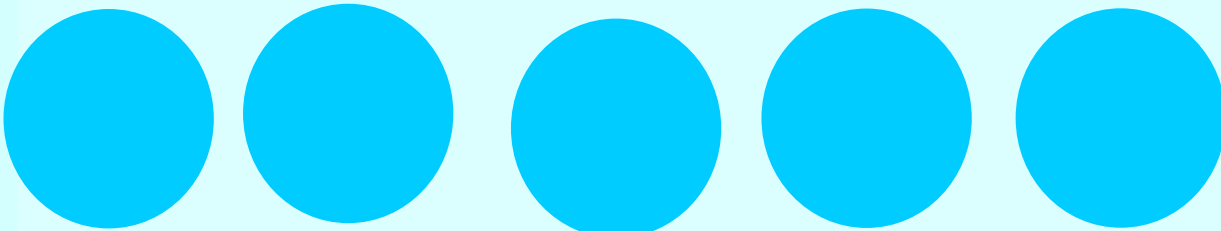


Invest in youth, education and workforce development

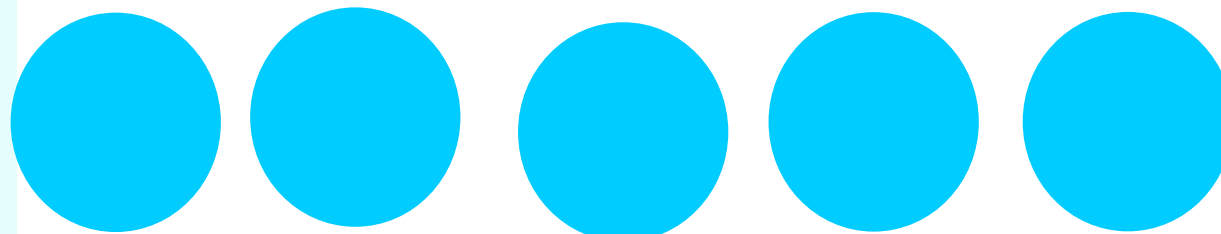
Support transit to better connect local communities (E7.2B)



Increase healthy activity in city's school system (PR3.1)



Encourage local history in elementary and secondary schools (HP5.1A)



Other priorities for early action? Write in additional action items from the plan here.

Comments?

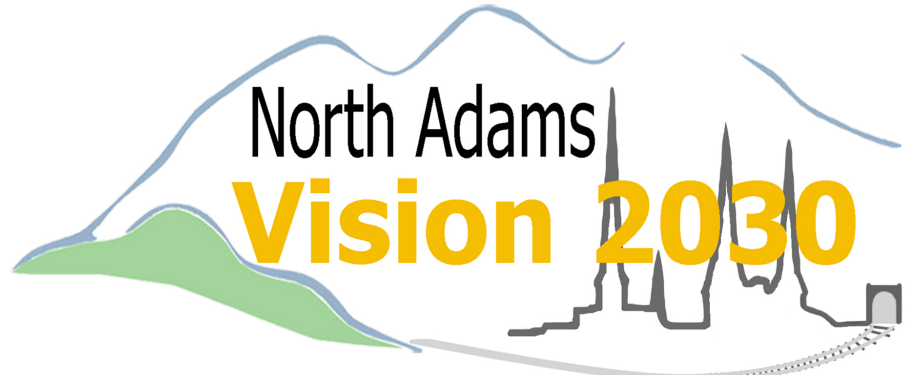
- Intergenerational composition of all subcommittees and boards responsible for the plan
- Where do plans fall for developing an active and engaging mentoring program and youth center
- Efficiency is always the best way to upgrade the energy system
- Youth center and structured activities

Top Priorities

1. Create a policy and incentive environment that is supportive of renewable energy project implementation. (IS 4.2)
2. Maximize use of existing energy efficiency and conservation programs through marketing and promotion of available options. (IS 4.4)
3. Support transit to better connect local communities (E7.2B)
4. Increase healthy activity in city's school system (PR3.1)
5. Encourage local history in elementary and secondary schools (HP5.1A)

Fiscal Efficiency

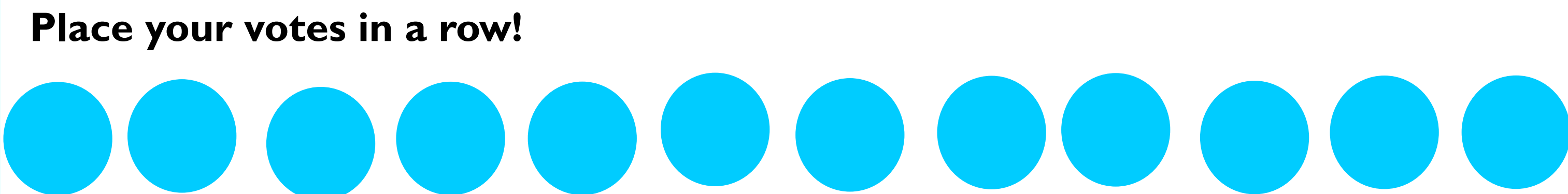
How many dollars (sticky dots) should each priority get?



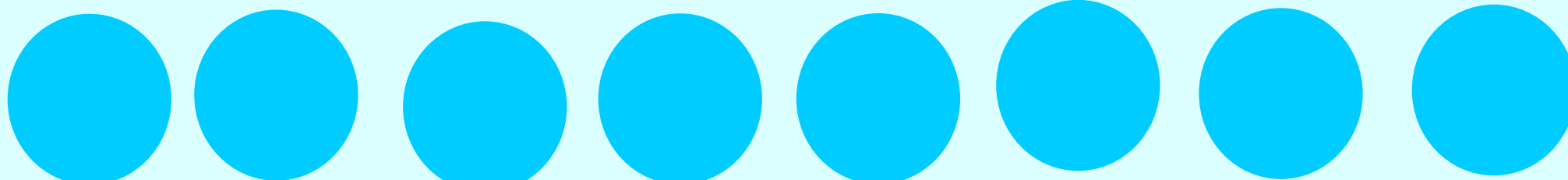
Priority work areas:

Create clear guides for capital improvement project phasing over time

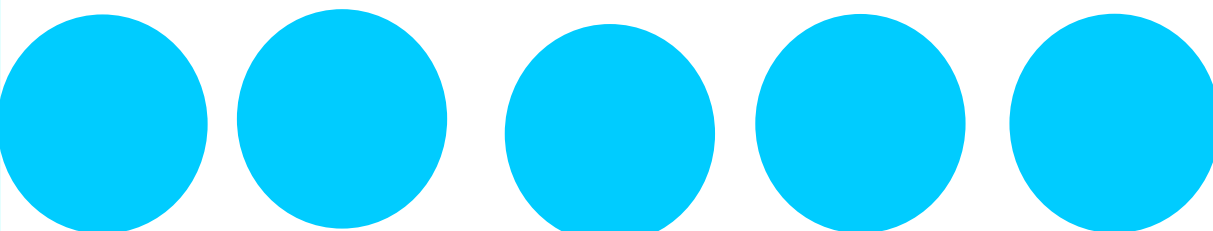
Ensure that long-term planning initiatives include the maintenance, operation and eventual replacement of existing infrastructure (IS4)



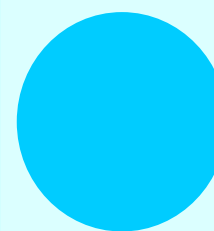
Implement and maintain an up-to-date water Capital Improvement Plan. (IS5.1)



Prioritize economic self sufficiency at the department level – where feasible, encourage the adoption of an enterprise fund and departments to engage in revenue generating strategies. (IS 1.2)

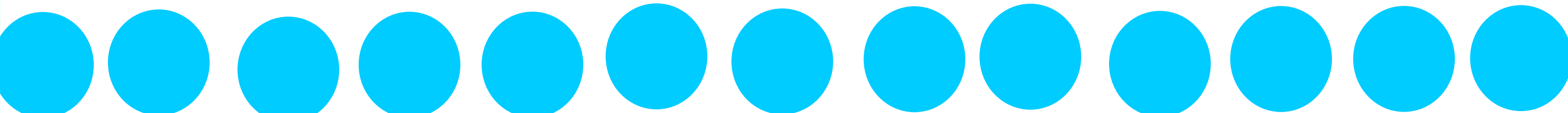


Policy IS 1.1: Engage in proactive asset management programs in all aspects of infrastructure planning including both new development and routine maintenance (IS 1.1)

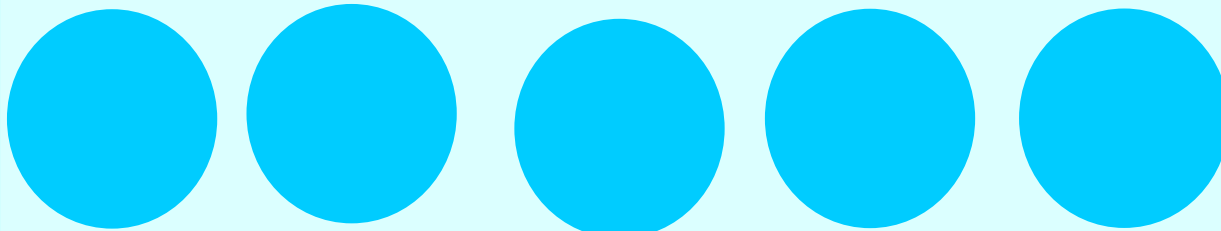


Maximize cost efficiencies

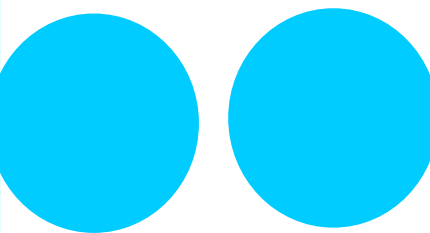
Continue to improve the City’s renewable energy portfolio (IS 4.4)



Explore new opportunities for shared services and/or regionalization to reduce costs and create efficiencies. (IS 1.3)



Prioritize economic self sufficiency at the department level – where feasible, encourage the adoption of an enterprise fund and departments to engage in revenue generating strategies. (IS 1.2)



Other priorities for early action? Write in additional action items from the plan here.



- Government should not be fee for service, but service for needs.

Top Priorities

1. Continue to improve the City’s renewable energy portfolio (IS 4.4)
2. Ensure that long-term planning initiatives include the maintenance, operation and eventual replacement of existing infrastructure (IS4)
3. Implement and maintain an up-to-date water Capital Improvement Plan. (IS5.1)